

## *Sternula antillarum* (Least Tern)

### Priority 1 Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN)

**Class:** Aves (Birds)

**Order:** Charadriiformes (Plovers, Sandpipers, And Allies)

**Family:** Laridae (Gulls, Jaegers, Kittiwakes, Skimmers, Skuas, And Terns)

#### General comments:

Average 182 pairs in the most recent 10 years, 90% at fewer than 5 discrete nesting areas, need intensive management for reproductive success. The first recorded nesting colony in Maine was at Pine Point, Scarborough in 1961 (Hunter 1975 Auk 92:143-145).

#### Species Conservation Range Maps for Least Tern:

Town Map: [Sternula antillarum\\_Towns.pdf](#)

Subwatershed Map: [Sternula antillarum\\_HUC12.pdf](#)

#### SGCN Priority Ranking - Designation Criteria:

##### Risk of Extirpation:

Maine Status: Endangered

**State Special Concern or NMFS Species of Concern: NA**

**Recent Significant Declines: NA**

**Regional Endemic: NA**

##### High Regional Conservation Priority:

**Northeast Endangered Species and Wildlife Diversity Technical Committee:**

Risk: Yes, Data: Yes, Area: No, Spec: No, Warrant Listing: No, Total Categories with "Yes": 2

**North American Waterbird Conservation Plan:**

High Concern

**United States Birds of Conservation Concern:**

Bird of Conservation Concern in Bird Conservation Regions 14 and/or 30: Yes

**High Climate Change Vulnerability: NA**

**Understudied rare taxa: NA**

**Historical: NA**

**Culturally Significant: NA**

#### Habitats Assigned to Least Tern:

##### Formation Name Intertidal

**Macrogroup Name Intertidal Sandy Shore**

**Habitat System Name:** Sand Beach **\*\*Primary Habitat\*\*** **Notes:** *nesting*

**Habitat System Name:** Sand Flat **\*\*Primary Habitat\*\*** **Notes:** *feeding*

**Habitat System Name:** Submerged Aquatic Vegetation **Notes:** *feeding*

**Macrogroup Name Intertidal Tidal Marsh (peat-forming)**

**Habitat System Name:** Coastal Plain Tidal Marsh **Notes:** *feeding*

**Macrogroup Name Intertidal Water Column**

**Habitat System Name:** Confined Channel **Notes:** *feeding*

**Habitat System Name:** Embayment **Notes:** *feeding*

**Habitat System Name:** Exposed Shore **Notes:** *feeding*

#### Stressors Assigned to Least Tern:

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Stressor Priority Level based on Severity and Actionability		Moderate Severity	High Severity
	Highly Actionable	Medium-High	High
	Moderately Actionable	Medium	Medium-High
	Actionable with Difficulty	Low	Low

#### IUCN Level 1 Threat      Human Intrusions and Disturbance

##### IUCN Level 2 Threat:      Recreational Activities

**Severity:** Severe

**Actionability:** Moderately actionable

**Notes:** Disturbance from recreational activities can be mitigated through outreach, municipal beach management agreements, protection of nesting areas, and municipal ordinances such as leash laws.

#### IUCN Level 1 Threat      Invasive and Other Problematic Species, Genes and Diseases

##### IUCN Level 2 Threat:      Invasive Non-native-Alien Species-Diseases

**Severity:** Moderate Severity

**Actionability:** Highly actionable

**Notes:** Predation issues from non native predators such as red fox can be reversible with intensive predator control.

##### IUCN Level 2 Threat:      Problematic Native Species-Diseases

**Severity:** Moderate Severity

**Actionability:** Highly actionable

**Notes:** Predation issues from native predators such as skunks, gulls and crows can be reversed using intensive predator control.

#### IUCN Level 1 Threat      Natural Systems Modifications

##### IUCN Level 2 Threat:      Other Ecosystem Modifications

**Severity:** Moderate Severity

**Actionability:** Moderately actionable

**Notes:** Habitat loss from beach erosion caused by existing rip rap, jettys, and seawalls. Impacts can be minimized through beach nourishment recommended during permit review of dredging projects.

#### IUCN Level 1 Threat      Other Options

##### IUCN Level 2 Threat:      Lack of knowledge

**Severity:** Moderate Severity

**Actionability:** Moderately actionable

**Notes:** Knowledge of population status, productivity, nesting areas needed to develop and implement protection initiatives.

#### IUCN Level 1 Threat      Pollution

##### IUCN Level 2 Threat:      Industrial and Military Effluents

**Severity:** Moderate Severity

**Actionability:** Moderately actionable

**Notes:** Habitat loss from oil/chemical spills

#### IUCN Level 1 Threat      Residential and Commercial Development

##### IUCN Level 2 Threat:      Tourism and Recreational Areas

**Severity:** Moderate Severity

**Actionability:** Moderately actionable

**Notes:** Can mitigate through outreach and recommendations during environmental review.

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**IUCN Level 1 Threat**      **Climate Change and Severe Weather**

**IUCN Level 2 Threat:**      Habitat Shifting or Alteration

**Severity:** Severe

**Actionability:** Actionable with difficulty

**Notes:** Nesting habitat loss from sea level rise will be difficult to reverse. Existing development and hardened shorelines will not allow Maine beaches to migrate inland as sea level rise occurs.

**IUCN Level 2 Threat:**      Storms and Flooding

**Severity:** Severe

**Actionability:** Actionable with difficulty

**Notes:** Nesting habitat loss due to beach erosion may be mitigated through environmental review recommendations.

**IUCN Level 2 Threat:**      Temperature Extremes

**Severity:** Moderate Severity

**Actionability:** Actionable with difficulty

**Notes:** Impacts to food resources may occur due to increase in ocean temperatures.

### Species Level Conservation Actions Assigned to Least Tern:

*\*Only species specific conservation actions that address high (red) or medium-high (orange) priority stressors are summarized here.*

**Conservation Action**      **Category:** Species Management      **Biological Priority:** critical      **Type:** on-going  
Continue current management activities including: stake and twine symbolic fencing around nesting areas, exclosures around colonies, posting signage to identify nesting areas, and locating and monitoring nesting pairs.

#### Stressor(s) Addressed By This Conservation Action

Recreational Activities

Tourism and Recreational Areas

**Conservation Action**      **Category:** Habitat Management      **Biological Priority:** high      **Type:** on-going  
Develop long-term, non-regulatory habitat protection via management agreements or conservation easements.

#### Stressor(s) Addressed By This Conservation Action

Recreational Activities

Tourism and Recreational Areas

Habitat Shifting or Alteration

**Conservation Action**      **Category:** Public Outreach      **Biological Priority:** high      **Type:** on-going  
Continue efforts to educate beach recreationalists, landowners and municipal officials regarding ecology and life history requirements.

#### Stressor(s) Addressed By This Conservation Action

Recreational Activities

Tourism and Recreational Areas

**Conservation Action**      **Category:** Species Management      **Biological Priority:** critical      **Type:** on-going  
Continue targeted management of native and nonnative predators at nesting and brood rearing areas, including lethal and nonlethal methods

#### Stressor(s) Addressed By This Conservation Action

Invasive Non-native-Alien Species-Diseases

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<b>Conservation Action</b>	<b>Category:</b> Survey and Monitoring	<b>Biological Priority:</b> moderate	<b>Type:</b> on-going
Continue efforts to recruit and provide training sessions for volunteer beach monitors.			

#### Stressor(s) Addressed By This Conservation Action

Recreational Activities

<b>Conservation Action</b>	<b>Category:</b> Survey and Monitoring	<b>Biological Priority:</b> high	<b>Type:</b> on-going
Continue efforts to annually monitor abundance, distribution, and productivity.			

#### Stressor(s) Addressed By This Conservation Action

Recreational Activities

Lack of knowledge

#### Guild Level Conservation Actions:

This Species is currently not attributed to a guild.

#### Broad Taxonomic Group Conservation Actions:

Additional relevant conservation actions for this species are assigned within broader taxonomic groups in Maine's 2015 Wildlife Action Plan: Element 4, Table 4-1.

#### Habitat Based Conservation Actions:

Additional conservation actions that may benefit habitat(s) associated with this species can be found in Maine's 2015 Wildlife Action Plan: Element 4, Table 4-15. Click on the Habitat Grouping of interest to launch a habitat based report summarizing relevant conservation actions and associated SGCN.

*The Wildlife Action Plan was developed through a lengthy participatory process with state agencies, targeted conservation partners, and the general public. The Plan is non-regulatory. The species, stressors, and voluntary conservation actions identified in the Plan complement, but do not replace, existing work programs and priorities by state agencies and partners.*